from the depots, the price rises to the level of the British rate. It is therefore impossible to reduce the price everywhere to that which prevails at the depots without a breach of the conditions of the Convention. It is only six weeks since the new system began to work and it is not yet time to form an opinion as to its results. It is expected that competition will render salt cheap, especially as there is a margin of a quarter of a rupee per bag left for the benefit of the merchant or the consumer, by purchasing the commodity from the kuduchandrams or allams direct. Government also hope that with healthy competition the prices will adjust themselves in due course. The working of the new scheme will be watched with care.

Then, as regards the adulteration of salt, it is doubtful whether the salt sold at present is so bad as it is represented to be. Bombay salt is itself of inferior quality, but the people of this State have a predilection for it and its importation under present conditions cannot be helped. As you know, steps have been taken to improve the salt manufacture here so as to turn out the best kind of salt, and if it is produced in sufficient quantity and popularises itself among the people it may gradually tend to displace Bombay salt. The difficulty in the Alleppey depot to which Mr. Raghava Menon referred will be brought to the notice of the Excise Commissioner.

142. Arrangement for the sale of stamps in Anchal and Registration offices.

Mr. T. Kumara Pillai (*Kalkulam*) represented that at present stamp vendors offered to sell stamp papers at nominal rates of discount and put poor and ignorant people to considerable hardship and loss. No stamp paper was sold at its real value and very often parties had to go without stamps on account of the irregularities and vagaries of these men. He prayed that a large discount of about 15 per cent. might be allowed to stamp vendors and stamps directed to be sold from the taluk cutcherry, the Sub-registrar's office and the anchal office alike.

Reply.—It is not proper to burden anchal officers with the sale of stamp papers without giving them additional remuneration which the rules do not permit. Licensed vendors are generally stationed near registration offices. Wherever their number can be increased with benefit to the public, it will be done.

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